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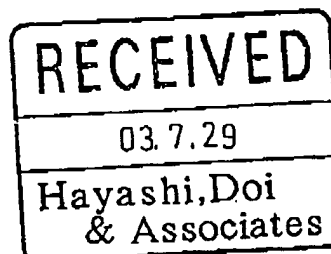
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HASELTINE LAKE

PATENT & TRADE MARK ATTORNEYS



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By Fax & Post: 008145 475 2468

Our Ref: HL77096/LEB/JAW

21 July 2003

URGENT

Dear Sirs

Re: European Patent Application No. 00307873.0(1086731)
Sega Corporation
Data Processing Method
Your Reference: 1999215E02EP

The partial European search report for this application has now been issued. We enclose a copy of the search report, together with copies (to follow) of the cited documents and the "Annex" showing equivalent documents.

You will see that three documents have been cited, copies of which are enclosed with the hard copy of this letter. The citations have been made in category X, and the Search Examiner considers them to anticipate claims 1-4, 7-10 of the application. We have not examined the citations except to check that they are generally relevant.

The Search Examiner who performed the search has raised a "lack of unity" objection against the present claims. That is, he considers that the claims refer to five inventions which are not linked by a common inventive concept. These "inventions" are set out on a "Sheet B" accompanying the search report.

So far, only the first invention (claim group 1-4, 7-10) has been searched, and if no action is taken, the application will proceed on the basis that this is the invention for which protection is sought. If the Search Examiner's assessment of lack of unity is correct, it will not be possible to obtain separate protection for other claim groups except by filing one or more divisional applications.

However, if further search fees are paid, further searches will be carried out specifically with regard to the subject-matter of the other inventions. If this is done now, it will be possible for the present application to proceed on the basis of any one of the searched inventions.

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In view of the large number (five) of "inventions" identified in this case, it may not be economic to pay four additional search fees for all of them. Therefore, please consider whether any of the unsearched claim groups are especially important. Please inform me how many further search fees you wish to pay, and which claims are to be covered.

N.B. The European Patent Office has set a one-month term expiring 10th August 2003 for paying further search fees, in order to initiate further searches at this stage. If you do require additional searches for any of the unsearched claim groups, please inform me as soon as possible.

There is also the possibility of filing voluntary amendments in the light of the documents found in the search, although there is no obligation to file any response to the search report at this stage. We can simply await the issue of a first substantive official action, in which the Examiner should consider in detail the relevance of the cited documents to the novelty and inventive step of the present invention. However, if you believe that it would be appropriate to amend the application before a first substantive official action is issued, please inform us of any amendments which you require.

Yours faithfully



L E Billington
Haseltine Lake

Enc by fax - partial search report and annex
by mail - as above, plus copies of cited documents.



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Zeichen/Ref./R&M. LEB/HL77096	ORIGINAL TO RECORDS	Anmeldung Nr./Application No./Demande n°/Patent Nr./Patent No./Brevet n° 00307873-0-2413/
Anmelder/Applicant/Demandeur/Patentansøger/Proprietor/Titulaire SEGA CORPORATION		

009

COMMUNICATION

The European Patent Office herewith transmits the partial European search report under Rule 46(1) EPC relating to the above-mentioned European patent application.

Copies of the documents cited in the search report are enclosed.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the following:

The search Division informs the applicant that if the European search report is also to cover inventions other than the invention first mentioned in the claims, a further search fee must be paid for each of these inventions, within ONE MONTH after notification of this communication.

If the application has been filed up to 30 June 1999, the search fee in force before 01 July 1999 (EUR 869,-) or the equivalent applicable on the date of payment is payable. This applies also to the search fees requested under Rule 46(1) EPC. See also OJ EPO 06/1999, 405.

- ☐ The abstract was modified by the Search Division and the definitive text is attached to the present communication.
- ☐ Additional set(s) of copies of the documents cited in the European search report is (are) enclosed as well.

LEEDS ADMIN	
Dir. No.	10108103
Remunde	2267163
Date	01/08/03
Initials	22/03
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COMPUTER
14 JUL 2003
NOTED



Note to users of the automatic debiting procedure:

Unless the EPO receives prior instructions to the contrary, the search fee(s) will be debited on the last day of the period for payment. For further details see the Arrangements for the automatic debiting procedure, Supplement to OJ EPO 02/1999.

REGISTERED LETTER

Application Number

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X	WO 96 25989 A (VELOCITY INC) 29 August 1996 (1996-08-29) * abstract * * page 2, line 6 - line 17 * * page 5, line 10 - line 28 * * page 7, line 1 - page 8, line 2 * * page 8, line 23 - page 9, line 2 * * page 12, line 8 - page 13, line 8 * * page 17, line 22 - page 18, line 4 * * page 18, line 24 - page 21, line 23 * * claims 1,17,21; figure 6 *	1-4,7-10	A63F13/12 H04L29/06 H04L29/08
X	WO 99 32990 A (KONINKL PHILIPS ELECTRONICS NV ;PHILIPS SVENSKA AB (SE)) 1 July 1999 (1999-07-01) * abstract * * page 3, line 21 - line 29 * * page 4, line 30 - page 5, line 32 * * page 6, line 21 - page 7, line 24 * --- -/-	1-4,7-10	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7) A63F H04L
LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION			
The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:			
see sheet B			
The present partial European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims.			
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner	
MUNICH	3 July 2003	Nicu1iu, R	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			



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Office

PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 00 30 7873

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (InCL7)
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	
X	WO 97 43846 A (KOUTS MICHAEL ; MCKELLER DAVID (CA); PLUMB MARC (CA); SHIELDS DANIE) 20 November 1997 (1997-11-20) * abstract * * page 4, line 17 - page 29 * * page 5, line 22 - page 7, line 2 * * page 8, line 27 - line 30 * * page 10, line 26 - page 11, line 22 * * page 12, line 5 - page 13, line 13 * * claims 1,3,5,11; figure 4 *	1-4,7-10	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (InCL7)

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EPO FORM 1503 03.02 (P04C10)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 00 30 7873

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

03-07-2003

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 9625989 A	29-08-1996	AU 4929096 A WO 9625989 A2	11-09-1996 29-08-1996
WO 9932990 A	01-07-1999	US 6356288 B1 CN 1252145 T EP 0981795 A2 WO 9932990 A2 JP 2002528045 T	12-03-2002 03-05-2000 01-03-2000 01-07-1999 27-08-2002
WO 9743846 A	20-11-1997	US 6050898 A AU 2687697 A WO 9743846 A1 EP 0958687 A1 US 6390922 B1	18-04-2000 05-12-1997 20-11-1997 24-11-1999 21-05-2002



European Patent
Office

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B

Application Number
EP 00 30 7873

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims: 1-4,7-10

synchronizing game devices in a network to the longest delay of any of the participating devices; compensating for different network latencies.

2. Claims: 5,6,11,12

displaying an image of objects arranged in a virtual space; rendering of virtual objects.

3. Claims: 13-16

setup of a communication between networked gaming devices.

4. Claims: 17,18

registration of game players.

5. Claims: 19-24

determination of the ranking of players in a network game.